

These Linn County Businesses Went Tobacco-Free, and So Can Yours!

The Linn Mar Community School district has had a long time established tobacco-free campus policy. This policy enforced on all school properties. We have found that promoting a tobacco-free campus allows our community to be aware of Linn Mar Schools as a high academic entity and a proponent of healthy lifestyles. The Linn Mar staff know that in order to promote our mission: “Inspire Learning. Unlock Potential. Empower Achievement.” we also need to promote healthy lifestyles for our students and staff.

—Linn Mar Community School District | Linn-Mar Community Schools | Phone: 319.447.3003

The team of Jules Bakery is extraordinarily proud to be a tobacco-free company. In our business we are dependent on team members being healthy, which reduces illness and absenteeism. Among other illnesses, smoking is notorious for spawning chronic colds and coughing -- something that is not acceptable when we are making food for customers. Ultimately having a tobacco-free policy ensures that we keep ourselves healthy AND contribute to the health of our customers. In addition, as a business involved in the lovely smells of baking, our senses of smell and taste are stronger without smoking, helping us create better tasting bakery goodies.”

– Julianne Hardin CEO, Owner of Jules Bakery, Inc. | Jules Bakery | 319.447.0943

For many years we allowed smoking/chewing in our facility – as did most manufacturing facilities. After recognizing the hazards of second-hand smoke and how disgusting chewing tobacco is, we changed our policy to no smoking/chewing in our buildings or vehicles. After that, employees stood outside our facility and smoked. We felt that wasn't setting a very good example, so we established two designated smoking/chewing areas -- away from the front of the building and both outside.

After a while, we set up picnic tables and an awning, and that was designated as our one smoking/chewing area; employees were still able to smoke/chew in their vehicles in the parking lot.

For years we felt we had to accommodate smokers/chewers in some way, but after visiting with our health insurance carrier, they pointed out the fact that, if we truly wanted to be a company focused on wellness, than providing them a place to smoke/chew was not in line with that thinking. So...we decided that it would be in the best interests of ALL employees to be totally tobacco-free in all buildings and on the grounds – including the parking lot. We gave employees six months notice, and enacted the change in August of 2009.

We have had a few offenders since then, but are very happy with the decision we made. Our biggest fear was losing good employees, but we found that it actually encouraged many of them to give up tobacco entirely. Our parking lot is cleaner, our employees' lungs are clearer, and we feel good about not providing a place where they can work at destroying their health.

We are very focused on wellness at Midwest Metal Products, and will reimburse employees 100% for any smoking/chewing cessation programs they use. We have done this for years, and will continue to do so. We will do whatever we can to help employees break their tobacco habit.

In hindsight, we wish we would have done this years ago. We lost a great employee to lung cancer, and maybe it would have made a difference had we implemented this sooner. There is no reason in the world that an employer has provide a place for employees to smoke or chew. If they want to do it on their own time – fine – but we don't have to be a part of it.

Wellness works!

- Rita Jelinek, Midwest Metal Products | Midwest Metal Products | Phone: 319.366.6264

Getting Started: How to Become a Tobacco-Free Business

After your organization has committed to the health of your employees and consumers by providing a tobacco-free workplace, here are some recommended steps you can follow to implement your tobacco-free policy:

1. Plan:

During this initial phase, you will want to gather as much information as possible related to your existing tobacco policy, effects of tobacco on your workplace, and an example of a tobacco-free campus policy—which is included in this toolkit.

2. Legal:

Iowa does **not** have a Smoker Protection Law that would consider a tobacco-free policy discriminatory. There is no constitutional right to use tobacco, so it would not be an infringement of personal rights and liberties to prohibit tobacco in or around the workplace grounds.

3. Committee Development:

After you have gathered all the pertinent information (and shared it with any other decision makers in your organization), announce your organizations commitment to create a tobacco-free environment as a measure of health and dedication to employees.

From here, you may want to put together a committee of employees and decision makers. It is important to include tobacco users (smokers and smokeless tobacco users) on your committee; the committee could be assigned to assist in the implementation of the policy. Be sure there is an assigned leader to the group (ex: human resource officer, employee relations advisor, manager, etc.) who is already onboard with the policy change.

Build top management support and “buy in” for tobacco-free policy. Throughout the process, the environment should be supportive and have a strong process for communication.

4. Draft Your Policy

An effective tobacco-free policy prohibits use of tobacco, tobacco-like products, emerging tobacco products or simulated smoking device anywhere on grounds owned, leased, rented or maintained by the company. This policy also includes all nicotine products not regulated or approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Evaluate employee feedback and adjust the policy, if needed.



5. Set-up:

From here, the group will need to develop a timetable and set a specific date to become a tobacco-free workplace. Some organizations find it useful to choose a nationally recognized day such as World No Tobacco Day, held annually on May 31, or the Great American Smoke-Out, held annually in November. Allow your employees and company at least three to six months to prepare between announcing the policy change and implementing the new policy (depending on size of business and challenge). Develop and offer all employee incentives and rewards to go and promote staying tobacco-free.

6. Distribution:

Distribute and share the tobacco-free policy and implementation plan to all employees through appropriate communication channels. It is a good idea to communicate the change in various ways—employee newsletters, paycheck announcements, through managers, etc. It will be of value to inform contractors and/or vendors of the tobacco-free campus policy change either through memo or letter. When the policy is finalized, print and post it in various places, highlighting the implementation date.

7. Education:

This phase is crucial and another place where your committee will be helpful. Educate employees and patrons by:

- Including information about the policy in the company newsletter, paycheck inserts, all staff e-mails, bulletin boards, and employee meetings;
- Display signs announcing the day you will become tobacco-free;
- Place notices in present designated smoking areas to remind users of the upcoming change;
- Send a news release to the local media—be prepared for an interview;
- Use posters to help educate employees about the need to be tobacco-free. Include information about the cessation resources available through Quitline Iowa and/or your health insurance plan;
- Provide in-service training to management and other key employees;
- Provide information to employees about nicotine addiction and barriers to quitting. Never blame the tobacco users for their addiction. Keep the focus on the tobacco product.
- Promote the use tobacco cessation resources for employees;



8. Implement and Enforce:

When it is time to implement the policy, make changes to facilitate the tobacco-free environment. Posting “tobacco-free campus” signs, while removing tobacco receptacles will reinforce the new policy. Enforce the policy from day one. Most companies report that once a comprehensive tobacco-free policy is in place, employees and consumers tend to do well with compliance. Appoint a top-management “point-person” who monitors the policy and can receive questions, concerns, or deal with infractions. Infractions should be handled with standard company disciplinary procedures. Remember that creating a supportive environment where successes are continually recognized, is the best form of enforcement.

9. Follow-Up:

Just like any policy, it is important to consistently evaluate and refine the policy. You can enhance this process by receiving feedback from employees and the public. This is especially helpful during the course of the first two years after the policy is in place. Be flexible and positive with all employees. Support and recognize employees who quit tobacco, emphasizing how difficult nicotine is to quit.

“Paying for tobacco use cessation treatments is the single most cost effective health insurance benefit that can be provided to employees.”

–Department of Health and Human Services, 2005 Centers for Disease Control And Prevention

Offer Free Cessation Through Your Health Insurance Program

Cost-effectiveness analyses have shown that smoking cessation treatment compares favorably with hypertension treatment and other preventive interventions such as annual mammographies, pap tests, colon cancer screenings, and treatment of high levels of serum cholesterol.

Including treatment in your insurance plan can lead to:

- Lower prevalence of death and disease among policy holders.
- Lower claim volumes and severity of claims.
- More competitive health insurance premiums for employer.⁶

Cost Savings

\$2,381.32	Cost of tobacco use per employee in Iowa (not including lost productivity)
- \$45.00	Cost per employee providing tobacco cessation in the workplace

\$2,336.32	Amount saved per employee who quits their tobacco use. ⁷

Calculate Your Potential Saving

Go to www.businesscaseroi.org/roi/default.aspx for a “Return on Investment” business calculator, where you can see how quickly you can save money by offering tobacco cessation and counseling to your employees.

Linn County Resources

Linn County Public Health currently offers free resources to employees wishing to quit their tobacco use:

Linn County is currently able to provide free nicotine-replacement therapy (lozenges, gum and/or patches) to Linn County residents through March 2012. Quitline Iowa’s services are available by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW or www.quitlineiowa.org. This confidential phone call will put your employees in touch with a cessation counselor to help your employees quit tobacco use.

Although all companies are highly encouraged to provide cessation benefits in healthcare packages, we are lucky that Iowa provides free counseling to help users quit. It is known that people who seek cessation counseling increase their chances of quitting. The types of cessation medications available and recommendations for usage change frequently. Also, dosage and length of use varies according to how much the user smokes or chews. Counselors can make sure your employees who use tobacco are getting the appropriate help in order to successfully quit.